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*Affecting Solidarities: Bringing Feeling into Feminism, Empathy in Employment and  
Compassion in Academic Communities of Crises*

**Abstract**

While a wider context of crisis and neoliberal practices engulfing academia has triggered a variety of debilitating impacts on both education and academic working lives, tourism academia remains an insulated workplace, slowly responding to efforts corresponding to a politics of care, diversity and inclusivity. In highlighting attention to the issue of gender equity in tourism academia, this paper draws on netnographic analysis from one global electronic mailing list and analyses empirical data on the issues of 'gender', 'women' and 'diversity'. The case study brings to the fore the urgency of addressing these issues as regards tourism academia. The latter is a space that we argue would benefit from enactments that nurture affectivities of solidarity. These are exemplified in the form of caring, compassionate and feeling fuelled inclusive workplaces. This paper aims to stimulate further debate in underscoring the need to introduce what we term 'unbounded feminisms of solidarity and compassion'.

**Keywords:** academic communities, tourism academia, affectivities of solidarity, gender, intersectionality

## Introduction

Many government and pan-European policies now openly encourage women's participation in the labour market and a more competent use of women's skills (i.e. Equality Act, 2010 in Britain; Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019). While numbers of women in leading positions seemed to have increased in recent years, barriers and challenges still exist. Interventions and legal actions aim to improve women's access to leadership, yet, it is still 'a slow movement' (Connolly et al., 2016: 838). Indeed, gender remains an extensive source of research discussion as regards privilege and disadvantage in employment and management. Gender also occupies centre stage in a number of heated debates regarding workplace equality (cf. Beirne & Wilson, 2016). Additionally, for most of their careers, women are questioned over the extent of their ability to undertake professional work in relation to such matters as: their bodies' reproductive capacities; concerns over emotionality; ageing and menopausal trajectories, as well as the stereotypes and stigmatisation regarding these specific matters (cf. Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012; Atkinson et al., 2015).

Academia is not free from challenges posed by gender inequality. Studies on women emphasise the challenging university work climate (Bingham & Nix, 2010; Christou, 2016) and barriers to their success (O'Neil et al., 2008; LaPan et al., 2013). The two reoccurring key words, 'Glass ceiling' and 'Labyrinth' seem to define the academic landscape in which women function (Mohajeri et al., 2015). Tourism academia also contributes to this debate by providing hard evidence on the poor representation of women in leadership positions that shape the tourism academic landscape, postulating to increase gender diversity (i.e. Chambers et al., 2017; Munar et al., 2017; Pritchard, 2018). The growth in the number of statistical reports (i.e. Munar et al., 2015) as well as special issues (i.e. Anatolia, Vol 28 Issue 4, 2017; Tourism Culture & Communication, Vol 18 Issue 1, 2018) recently published have stimulated more interest in the topic of gender which also reflects global policies and initiatives (i.e. Sustainable Development Goals; Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019). While the number of publications is on the rise, the meaningful change in the provision of equal opportunities for both women and men in tourism academia is yet to come (Pritchard & Morgan, 2017; Pritchard, 2018).

This paper thus contributes to and extends existing work on gender in tourism academia by, firstly, pointing to the role of *informal solidarity* (Kapeller & Wolkenstein, 2013; Wilde, 2007) in championing women in the academy. And secondly, in response to recent calls (Chambers & Rakić, 2018; Pritchard, 2018), it broadens the gender discourse in tourism academy to *intersectionalities* – a topic 'too rarely discussed in tourism research' (Pritchard, 2018: 145), proposing to focus on gender as well as ethnicity, race, class, disability, sexuality, and age. This paper examines constraints encountered by female academics in the tourism educational landscape as well as examples of collective support from both women and men.

Methodologically, this paper uses data collected from an electronic global mailing list (pseudonym TOURLIST), including about 2,700 user-academics that have an academic/institutional affiliation grounded in the study of tourism. It contributes to current tourism scholarship on gender by utilising a qualitative methodology, as opposed to more common quantitative or conceptual studies. Using netnographic (internet ethnography) analysis (Kozinets, 2002; 2010; Langer & Beckham, 2005; Lugosi & Quinton, 2018), the paper examines user exchanges on TOURLIST – frequent, active, insightful and substantial discussions following

various announcements which were published between 2015 to July 2017. Empirical data on the core issues of 'gender', 'women' and 'diversity' is presented, using twenty two distinctive discussions (threads) related to gender in tourism academia. The qualitative data collected through an electronic mailing list provide insights on feminist activism in the tourism academy.

The paper is structured as follows: the first section reviews two areas in the literature, which underpin the current paper, firstly, gender issues in academia, including those in the tourism academic landscape, secondly, the notion of solidarity. The qualitative method is then explained. This is followed by the presentation and discussion of findings, which consider gender as well as intersectionality.

### **Affectivities of Solidarity in Academic Communities: Crafting Inclusive Working Lives**

Academia is not free from challenges posed by gender inequality. Studies on women in leadership positions examined a number of themes: the less accommodating university work climate for women (Bingham & Nix, 2010), barriers to success for women in terms of balancing career and family (O'Neil et al., 2008) and the ways of negotiating such barriers faced by women in higher education (LaPan et al., 2013). 'Glass ceiling' and 'Labyrinth' are two key terms that often appear in research on gender discrepancy attempting to understand the various challenges that women encounter in higher education (Mohajeri et al., 2015).

Tourism academia has seen a rapid growth in research on gender aspects in recent years. The report written by Munar and colleagues (2015) entitled "The Gender Gap in the Tourism Academy" was the first pioneering attempt to gather statistical data and indicators on gender in the tourism academy. The key findings specify that: a) men constitute 79% of top editorial positions in the top 20 tourism and hospitality journals; b) 76% of conference keynotes are men; c) 87% of The International Academy for the Study of Tourism (IAST) fellows and fellows emeriti are men, and d) 64% of men feature as authors in the prestigious Encyclopaedia of Tourism. The seminal report documents a striking gender gap, providing evidence that women remain significantly under-represented in leadership and gatekeeping positions in the international tourism academy.

A number of other publications shed more light on the challenges that women in tourism academia face. Pritchard and Morgan's (2017) study examined citations and h-indices of tourism scholars, again, highlighting the "invisibility" of women tourism researchers. Further, examining professorial positions, they found that, in the UK, only 11 percent of tourism professors are female, with similar figures dominating in New Zealand and Australia. Ek and Larson (2017), analysing the celebratory 'portraits of pioneers in tourism research and education' published in the journal *Anatolia* between 2013 and 2016 with 7% of female researchers, note that "the alpha male" of the tourism academy, the celebrated tourism scholar image, predominantly Euro- and Anglo-centric male, reproduces the existing gender gap in the tourism academy. In short, these studies, based on the analysis of available statistical data, highlight the continued discrepancies between men and women and inequality of women in tourism academia.

While most of the research has been conducted in countries of the Global North, an analysis of tourism academia in Ecuador (Basurto-Barcia & Ricaurte-Quijano, 2017) pointed to the male dominance in conference chairs and keynote speakers with gender stereotypes being deeply ingrained. Chinese tourism academia is no different, with low awareness of gender issues and passive attitudes among female tourism academics (Xu, Wang & Ye, 2017). Little interest in the topic of gender beyond the context of the Global North does not mean, of course, that the challenges do not exist. The diverse voices of women from and within Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean in tourism scholarship are yet to be heard (Chambers & Rakić, 2018). One deficit in the research on tourism gender is related to *intersectionalities*. Chambers and Rakić (2018: 3) argue that ‘tourism gender research has also failed to take sufficient account of the complex intersectionalities between gender and a host of identifications including race, class, sexuality, and age.’ In tourism research generally, intersectionality has rarely been examined (Pritchard, 2018).

While research often documents the uneven role that women and men have in tourism academia, some concrete solutions on how to tackle gender inequality have been offered. For example, Pritchard & Morgan (2017) devised a ‘manifesto for action in tourism academic leadership’, calling on scholars and organisations for ‘undoing gender’ which included nine initiatives aimed at achieving greater gender equality in the tourism academy by 2021. Pritchard (2018) proposes transparent processes over editorial appointments ‘so that tourism becomes a leader of good academic governance’ (p.145). While there is a stronger recognition of gender inequality in academia and the volume of academic research is on the rise, changes in the tourism academy are slow.

In the world of work, solidarity has historically been understood as the arena of organised labour (Fantasia, 1989), with Poland’s Solidarity movement (*Solidarność*) being a powerful example of an anti-communism trade union movement that led to the country’s post-socialist market economy, free trade and institutional building. Yet, meanings of solidarity are multiple and changing (Kapeller & Wolkenstein, 2013), now encompassing informal cultures of support and encouragement in the workplace, where ‘communities of coping’ are formed (Korczynski, 2003). This paper combines the discourse on solidarity with that of emotions. Following research recently published by Askins and Blazek (2017: 1101) on emotions in academic practices, this paper views academia as centred around values of generosity, collegiality and the communal, rather than grounded in a model of individual ‘success’ and ‘achievement’. In other words, solidarity, which can ‘develop in struggles against systematic discrimination’ (Wilde 2007: 174), leads to expressions of collective support, which for an individual can be deeply emotional.

Such emotionalities are clearly exacerbated by the emergence of times of austere neoliberal politics seeping into the core of academic practice and governance. Spitzer-Hanks (2016: 386) warns that ‘in a period characterised by worries over the rise of the corporate university, it is important to ask what role feminism plays in the academy, and whether that role is commensurate with feminist values and ethics. In our current moment it is again necessary to consider the relationship among feminism, activism, and institutions of higher education’. In some countries, (notably the UK) such an academic landscape is often engulfed in the continuous ‘social apartheid’ of elite academic institutions that often entrench the proliferation of privilege by not addressing inequalities and replicating divisions through student admissions and staff appointments reflecting a lack of diversity.

Christou (2016) in a study on contemporary transformations of the lives of women academics, academic feminism and the career trajectories of feminist academics draws from research in Iceland, Greece and the UK. It explores some of the current constraints that women academics are facing. This is particularly pertinent given the wider transformations in the education sector. Some of these issues include the neoliberalisation and wider global educational restructuring. Christou conceptualises these themes through an account of affect and crises in the production of knowledge and the sustainability of work/life balance in contemporary social life. That is, Christou (2016: 34) focuses on 'affective performativities, publics and possibilities' and she identifies oppressive spaces in the academic landscape where neoliberal institutions legitimate a culture of the disciplined knowledge producer/worker through regulation, surveillance and restraint. As a result, Christou (2016: 34) encounters 'academic subjects of complicity, conformity and control, where any transgressive act of resistance is crushed and met with punitive and categorical classification of those seen as the "problematic trouble-makers"'. As a result, such "trouble-makers" stirring the scene may not be promoted, may be given "dirty" departmental work and even implicitly threatened with dismissal'.

Such a socio-political context of exacerbated managerialism and performance management within an audit and metrics driven culture in academia has not only led to an obsession with measurement of performance but also an instrumentalised thinking of the academic as a quantified worker, measured against rankings, league tables, assessment exercises and above all unjustifiably excessive work programme hours. Calls for a 'slow university' are instances of critical resistance to such measurement as value in 'addressing gender-based inequalities and expectations of relentless performativity' (O'Neill, 2014). Such almost unbearable working conditions have created a deep crisis in universities through the very same structural impacts that have produced extensive 'psychosocial and somatic catastrophe amongst academics (and other university workers) that manifests in experiences of chronic stress, anxiety, exhaustion, insomnia and spiralling rates of physical and mental illness' (Gill & Donaghue, 2016: 91). All these issues are part of a wider repertoire of academic life, one which is designated 'in crisis' and replete with 'hidden injuries of the neoliberal university' (Gill, 2010) but such new spaces are not simply a mosaic of subjective experiences of contemporary academic labour, they are collective realities that require a collective framework in coping with such strains (cf. Christou, 2016; Gill & Donaghue, 2016).

Set against this background, this research aims to extend the current debate on gender in tourism academia and include the voices of both women and men academics on day-to-day actions that shape the gender issues in the tourism academic world. By analysing instant discussions on one electronic global tourism mailing list, this paper sheds light on the contemporary issues of both gender diversity as well as inclusion in the international tourism academy.

### **Situating (Activist) Research Landscapes: A Methodological and Theoretical Note**

Methodological approaches that embrace qualitative inquiry as a reflective process underscore the strengths of such an approach (Agee, 2009). At the same time, the contributions of feminist and participatory action research are often exemplified in the form of direct social impact and an

ethics of caring (cf. Bloom & Sawin, 2009). Interestingly, contemporary academic debates have focused on an integral redefinition of the notion of the ‘human’ by pushing forward discussions on the ‘posthuman’ (with equivalent debates on transhumanism, antihumanism, metahumanism and new materialism) especially as regards bio-technological developments and their implications on social life (cf. Ferrando, 2013). We consider the theoretical locations of feminist new materialisms to be within the wider scope of the relevant discussions that can emerge from the position taken in this paper. Additionally, our epistemological and methodological stance is situated in an urgent call for gender equity and inclusive opportunities for women in tourism academia as employment spaces. That is, we are attuned to the materialities of workspaces as *not* static, fixed, passive, but rather, as processual in materialisations which are dynamic, shifting, entangled, diffractive and performative; implicated and infused with power structures which continue to marginalise women from participating fully in the potential of their working lives (cf. Moore, 2017). Here we are in full agreement with the position that argues, ‘giving voice to the collectivity of women is not a peripheral or a coincidental matter, but is pivotal to redressing issues that have hindered the advancement of feminist thinking’ (Woodward & Woodward, 2012: 446).

The latter is thus an integral objective and framing stance in how we proceeded to methodologically approach and carry out our study. That is, our study not only aims to give voice to the collectivity of women in tourism academia but also to vocally redress a holistic feminist embrace in how tourism academia can become more inclusive. In order to illustrate our argument and contribute to the discussion on gender equity in the academic workplace, a method of netnographic analysis (also known as internet ethnography) was chosen. We used discussions from one global mailing list (pseudonym TOURLIST), including about 2,700 user-academics that have an academic/ institutional or research/ teaching affiliation grounded in the study of tourism. The exchanges on academic mailing lists were previously used in research studies in the context of tourism although rarely focused on the data collection in an explicit way (Bricker et al., 2015). Netnography or netnographic research, was first developed and conceptualised by Kozinets (2002) in consumer and marketing research. The method has increasingly been utilised by tourism scholars who emphasise its value which ‘help probe the intricate qualitative aspects of the tourism experiences and practices’ (Zhang & Hitchcock, 2017: 320). To date the method has been used to research various themes, including, recruitment into tourism (Janta & Ladkin, 2009), touristic “eatertainment” (Mkono, 2011) tourism motivation (Podoshen, 2013) or tourist profiles (Wu & Pearce, 2018). Distinguished between the overt approach in which the researcher is actively engaged in collecting data by posting a message or query to online users, and passive approach based on observations only - utilised in this paper - it offers immediate and unobtrusive access to naturally occurring data (Kozinets, 2002; Lugosi & Quinton, 2018). In addition, a passive, non-participatory engagement allows for a prolonged observation and deep immersion of the exchanges between users. Following criteria for selecting appropriate study sites (Kozinets, 2010: 89), TOURLIST has been chosen due to popularity, its regular communication, as well as substantial and insightful exchanges between user-academics.

The data collection phase started with a search on the mailing list (listserv) between 2015 and July 2017, using a number of keywords such as ‘gender’, ‘women’ and ‘diversity’, as the stage first conducted in the research study. Following netnographic principles (i.e. Langer & Beckham, 2005), twenty two distinctive discussions (threads) were obtained, then copied and pasted into a

Word document and later analysed. While some of the threads focused solely and explicitly on issues linked to the underrepresentation of women in tourism academia, such as (written in the original form): '*Gender and Journal Publishing in Our Field*'; '*Gender Balance and Issues in Conferences and Academic Meetings and Symposiums*'; '*Continuing discussion of women & tourism and speaking truth to tourism*'; '*Gender in the academy versus women in the academy*'; '*Tokenism - can it be avoided?*'; '*The precarious situation of women in tourism - International Women's Day 2015*', other gender-related discussions emerged as responses to messages posted on different topics, for example: '*Seeking volunteers contributing to Anatolia's portrait series*'; '*Keynote Speakers - International Conference on Tourism*'; '*Declined Keynote invitations*'.

Thematic analysis and its six step approach, as specified by Braun and Clarke (2006) in their seminal paper, was used for the study. Following their guidelines, the analysis started with data familiarization by reading and rereading the printed transcripts of the chosen threads several times. Next, initial codes were generated (i.e. boycotting male-only conferences; expressions of joy; proposing solutions), followed by searching for potential themes (women and inequality; diversity of diversities). The next step involved reviewing themes, defining and naming final themes (Informal solidarity in Championing Women; From Gender Bias to Intersectionalities), and finally, selecting exemplary extracts. In order to maintain contributors' confidentiality, all names and any significant events mentioned have been anonymised. However, we also acknowledge that the exchanges on the mailing list are limited to a number of active users, and many voices, for example those from other non-Western institutions, or those who do not want to express their opinions in a larger forum, may not be represented. Acknowledging these limitations, we use the instant, rich and insightful material collected from the global mailing list as empirical context in discussing gender and women in the international tourism academy.

Undisputedly, there is still room for research, curricula and academic workplaces to strengthen platforms of inclusivity, equity and justice. The issues addressed in this paper are largely interrelated since the core concept of *power* is at the crux of what shapes learning, teaching, researching and working in academia. We seek to address some of these power entanglements in the next sections by presenting the thematic thread contributions we have selected and advancing propositions that would enhance more equal, just and inclusive interactions in tourism academia.

In this paper, we extend the discussion on gender discourse to intersectionality. From its inception, already three decades now intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) has had quite a profound impact on feminist approaches and applications in frameworks adopting an intersectional lens, discursive debates, theoretical framings and methodological paradigms that combine political and activist interventions. Kathy Davis (2008: 68) highlights the concept's success in contemporary feminist scholarship, 'given the confusion which the concept evokes among those who would most like to use it in their own research', and states that: 'Intersectionality' refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power. Originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality was intended to address the fact that the experiences and struggles of women of colour fell between the cracks of both feminist and anti-racist discourse'. Actually, in the same article above published in the journal *Feminist Theory*, Davis closely examines the phenomenon of intersectionality in scrutinising its spectacular success but also the uncertainties the concept generates and the controversies that have emerged.



Like most concepts, ‘intersectionality’ has its loyal followers, critical sceptics and vehement critics, and, presenting all positionalities here is beyond the scope and purpose of the paper. We find both intersectional theorising and praxis to offer fruitful opportunities to understand and transform exclusions; in the words of Cho, Crenshaw and McCall (2013: 786) from their article entitled: ‘Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis’, introducing a *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* special issue they have edited (‘Intersectionality: Theorizing Power, Empowering Theory’), we contend that: ‘As part of these efforts, scholars and activists illustrate how practice necessarily informs theory, and how theory ideally should inform best practices and community organising. These concerns reflect the normative and political dimensions of intersectionality and thus embody a motivation to go beyond mere comprehension of intersectional dynamics to transform them’. Hence, we find that the interconnections emerging in theory, practice, research, teaching and learning are all composed of political dimensions of inequalities that require more diversities and more intersectionalities. As it will be argued in the paper, intersectionality, in our view, is a tool with a potential to unveil even further oppressions. Using an intersectional lens, all women’s exclusions can be dealt with, including for instance, women of colour, LGBTQI, disabled, working-class, or ageing.

The urgency of the above is particularly alarming if we consider that despite, as Savigny (2014: 794) notes, the ‘considerable advances of feminist movements across Western societies, in Universities women are less likely to be promoted, or paid as much as their male colleagues, or even get jobs in the first place’, leading to ‘cultural sexism’ in academia and the realisation that academia as a professional activity is not only profoundly gendered but also sexist. In fact, Savigny makes a powerful contribution in arguing that it is the lack of open discussion of this issue that indeed compounds women’s under-representation in academic leadership at senior levels. In a sense, this silence and invisibility not only exacerbates barriers that trigger marginalisation of women but additionally constructs mechanisms of symbolic gendered violence when women suffer unsupported and in silence (cf. Mary Lawhon, 2018 on ‘Post-Weinstein Academia’).

We find that the term ‘cultural sexism’ developed by Heather Savigny (2014) in the empirical data she collected from women across British academia, is very much reflected in some of the extract threads we discuss in the next sections. The term emerged from Savigny’s data which were a body of experiences of women academics across disciplines exemplifying ‘everyday sexism’ which is ‘normalised’, ‘regularised’ and repeatedly present in a ‘chilly climate’ (Savigny, 2014, borrowing from Hall and Sandler, 1982) which devalues women’s contributions and systematically marginalises them. More specifically: ‘At an analytical level, the phrase “cultural sexism” combines the notion that sexism is an everyday, ordinary occurrence, which takes place within masculinised hegemonic structures which interact with and create cultural norms and values (which have an iterative, interactive and reconstitutive relationship with said structures). At an ontological level, it gives expression to the cumulative “drip drip” effects which impact on women, as gender is culturally and structurally “done” to them. Positioned in this way, women may be disempowered or marginalised. (...) within this positioning the roots of women’s agency and autonomy are also contained. Rendering dominant power structures visible provides the basis for reclamation of agency and autonomy. (...) this reclamation takes place through the expression of women’s experiences of these cultural norms as a mechanism to challenge and disrupt

dominant power structures within academia' (Savigny, 2014: 797). Parallel to this and in support of ways to reclaim agency and autonomy for those marginalised in academia (and here we mean again through an intersectional lens that acknowledges exclusions on the basis of gendered, classed, ethnicised, racialised, ableist, ageist, etc. social categorisations) we make a call for 'unbounded feminisms of solidarity and compassion'. The application of 'unbounded feminisms of solidarity and support' underscores the urgency for all academics to take responsibility in offering support/solidarity; in expressing and practising care/caring; in using their voice to create a platform for others to be heard; in giving time and attention to mentor and guide colleagues; in using whatever privilege as academics we might have to challenge marginalisation of other academics. We address this concept further in the sections that follow and we come to the assessment that no doubt various academics will have their own or specific views of the ways such 'unbounded feminisms' can take shape and form in practice, but, we disagree with any arguments and inferences that intersectional feminisms can become a smokescreen to foster no action to support women marginalised in academia, in displacing action to other marginalised groups. In our view, our thinking about future directions and actions in scholarship and professional practice in tourism academia can become truly inclusive when all dimensions of marginalisations are acknowledged and addressed.

### ***Informal Solidarity in Championing Women in the Academy***

The mailing list used in this research is a network of scholars associated with the tourism academy. Discussions in this global mailing list are known well to the authors and have been chosen for the analysis because of the frequent occurrence of the topic of the underrepresentation of women in academia which often led to controversial and heated debates among its users, occasionally resulting in attempts to abruptly cease the public conversation. As expressed by one of the users responding to such comments on the 'tiring' presence of the topic: 'the frequency of emails on gender equality is directly correlated with the frequency of obvious gender bias in academia' (male Reader, May 2017). While feminist [tourism] scholarship has its important place as a recognised study area, focusing on related to tourism topics such as, employment and empowerment, sex tourism or sexualised tourism environments (i.e. Pritchard, 2014), more recently it broadened to *tourism academia*. The lack of women occupying positions of authority and leadership at the prestigious International Academy for the Study of Tourism; leading journal boards; and overall the lack of presence of women at international conferences as keynote speakers triggered emotional reactions and interventions. While the proportion of female authors publishing in one of the most prominent journals, *Annals of Tourism Research*, increased from 19% in 1990 to 49% in 2015 (Nunkoo et al., 2017), yet women's prominence and academic research recognition in tourism scholarship has been minimal (Munar et al., 2015).

Discussions on the mailing list have been insightful, well-supported by numerous reports and statistics as well as scholarly research, providing evidence of journal authorship among men and women as well as statistics on keynote speakers from particular annual conferences. While the lack of female academics in journal editorships or departmental headships has been mentioned, it is the absence of women speakers at the international tourism conferences that triggers the most heated debates. It has also been noted that women are relatively often selected to (co)chair or (co)organise major conferences, though rarely they appear at international tourism conferences at

keynote speaker level. Responses to conference announcements vary, with reminders to the organisers about the various guidelines that have been developed (i.e. *Recommendations for Promoting Gender Equity and Balance in Tourism Conferences* by the Tourism Education Futures Initiative), through demands of detailed explanation, of the selection processes (being transparent and replicable), to radical acts of public boycotting ‘men-only keynote speakers’ conferences:

Dear X,

Although XXX (conference location removed) is a fantastic place, I have no feeling to participate in this "Full Testosterone XXX Conference" you promoted here, organised around:

- 4 male keynote speakers,
  - 4 male conference chairs,
- in which are mentioned "ethics" issues.

Regards (female Research Fellow, May 2017)

Displaying such radical action underscores and explains the paradox in the concept of *solidarity*. By emphasising the feeling of support and togetherness to one particular group, solidarity exhibits itself in antagonism to other groups (Wilde, 2007: 173). Yet, supporting and encouraging words are more commonly present on TOURLIST. During the two-year period, the exchanges related to the gender inequities and injustices led to publicising existing or new initiatives, such a WAiT (women academics in a tourism Facebook group); GenTour initiative, Equality in Tourism (an independent non-profit) or Women in Tourism (a women’s network in Scotland). Promoting good practices were also part of lively discussions. This included promoting best practices by sharing some encouraging data on the gender composition at some conferences and journal boards. One of the very lively exchanges emerged as a consequence of a conference announcement at an Australian university with all female keynote speakers, considered as an innovation in a reputable conference. Numerous comments were posted with brief posts such as: ‘Hear, hear X, well done!’ (female Associate Professor, May 2017) to longer, joyful, grateful emails and words of appreciation:

I applaud X and the team at X (city in Australia). If they can get four female speakers with admirable credentials, we should no longer accept the common excuses from conference organisers that no women speakers can be found, or that all the women speakers they had approached declined the invitation. X, you're a legend! Thank you for doing what you did. (female Senior Lecturer, May 2017)

Congratulations X and your Organising Committee for putting together a conference with an all-female keynote speaker line up, well done! I do believe it is the first tourism, hospitality, leisure or event studies conference that I have seen advertised that has done this – at least in the timeframe I have been involved in these listservs. May there come a day when it is not necessary to comment on this as something unusual...Best wishes for a successful conference. (female Lecturer, May 2017)

The manifestations of *solidarity* and ‘teaming up’ (Korczynski, 2003) among women actively seeking recognition as women academics in tourism have been evident in the exchanges. Their

brief, spontaneous, emotional responses contributed to the creation of ‘communities of coping’ through their encounters on TOURLIST, located at a distance. Words of solidarity and support from both women (and men) aimed to inspire actions for the future of the tourism academy.

In another post, male support in championing women as tourism leaders triggered immediate expressions of joy, kindness, happiness and appreciation:

I have just turned my computer on this morning to see X and X’s (male names) response to the conference announcement and it makes me so so so happy that we now have wonderfully progressive men who are now championing the gender equality cause in tourism studies. Thank you. This means SO much to those of us that are concerned about this issue. I rather think it’s incumbent not only on the conference organisers to ensure gender equity, but also on the keynotes themselves who accept these offers to ask who else is a keynote and to also progress gender equity. We have to ask the question of ourselves “What am I doing to progress the issue?” Thank you X and X from the bottom of my heart :-)

(female Professor, October 2015)

While all the extracts above are from women academics expressing their enthusiasm with the small, slow, albeit important and decisive actions to include more women keynotes and leadership in the profession, still it is essential to underscore the critical necessity for more men to embrace actions of affective solidarity, to take responsibility for such an appallingly inactive, almost unresponsive stance against the lack of recognition, promotion and advancement of women in tourism academia. As demonstrated, men’s supportive voices have been evident in the TOURIST discussions. Yet, more male voices are needed in the debate of women’s inequalities and injustices. Owing to their privileged position that men hold in academia, they should have empathy, compassion and sensitivity to the continuous challenges that women face. Creating academic spaces of learning and cultures of sensitivity can be a step towards greater inclusion in academia and to achieve that, men’s engagement is necessary. Men’s support is crucial in advocating for gender equality; they are the gatekeepers with access to resources required to implement justice (Connell, 2005). Despite their resistance, over the years men have supported women’s battles towards gender equality through campaigns, intellectual advocacy and political movements (Connell, 2003). Such ‘caring masculinities’ (Elliott, 2015), that is, nurturing and caring rather than dominating identities have the potential to lead to sustained social change. Collective and unified support from both men and women – an inclusive and collaborative project – is needed to improve the academic landscape. This paper makes a direct call here to male colleagues across disciplines and beyond tourism academia to embrace activities of solidarity for all. This is perceived as a necessary pathway to a practice of ethics of care in the profession.

### ***From Gender Bias to Intersectionalities: Dismantling Divides for Transformative Academies***

TOURLIST discussions resulted in a number of propositions by groups of academics, stimulating further debates. For example, one such debate concerned the topic of ‘tokenism’ or ‘pink quotas’. Women’s invitations as keynote speakers could potentially trigger uneasy thoughts, question their competence, reinforce the notion that they are not yet worthy as well as result in a higher pressure. Thus challenges in making a change were also part of the debate. Persistence and encouragement

to continue the gender discussion in order *to facilitate change* has been one of the key themes in the discussions. As highlighted by one of the male respondents, quick reactions to old academic practices were important to sustain the conversation: 'This repetitive, tiring, apparently threatening gender equality discussion will stop as soon as repetitive, tiring, truly threatening gender bias in academia stops.' (male Reader, May 2017).

However, a noteworthy exchange that resulted from the heated discussions was the advocacy to move from the sole gender discussion to broader issues of diversity, including race, ethnicity, sexuality and disability. The following bland and direct comments were made to point to specific features that are sought-after in tourism academia, the omnipresence of 'the old guard of tourism':

We need a de-centering of power and voice in all its forms, making our work inclusive, less "white", male, English-dominated and western; this can be done with conscious action for change. (female Senior Lecturer, January 2017)

The question here is therefore what can be done about this (beside changing one's name to sound male-white-western-upperclass). (female Associate Professor, September 2016)

Yet, the comments were supported by scholarly research representing various disciplines, stressing the range of the barriers in recruitment, promotion and general perceptions that exist. Those are not just gender-related but include other dimensions. The TOURLIST user cited above suggested undertaking a concrete step:

make change happen: If you want more women in professorships start hiring among the many excellent women academics out there, if you want a more diverse faculty hire among those bright scholars and graduates that represent that diversity. (female Associate Professor, September 2016)

One of the contributors was particularly explanatory about enhancing the debate beyond only championing women occupying positions of authority and leadership. They identify the core phrase of a 'diversity of diversities' which is an outstanding term to denote intersectionalities that incorporate decolonising and inclusive approaches to the incorporation of a multitude of diversities:

If we only champion women's place within the academy, there is a danger that when women occupy the sites of authority and power they will only replicate the current power structures and processes. While women's voices matter and women's experiences will bring new insights into tourism and its management, women should be speaking up for other marginalised voices to join them in the academy to have cacophonous conversations about possibilities and pathways. I will list a few of these: Indigenous people, people of the developing world, people of colour (to use US language), precarious workers on casual and fixed term contracts in the tourism academy, people with disabilities, precarious workers in tourism and the wider economy, working class representatives being undone by the current economy, the un/under-employed, young people, etc.. As I said before a diversity of diversities. (...)

There are many sites of oppression within our academy and I recommend we tackle this through the intersectionalities rather than on one base of identity politics alone, women. We will gain rich and rewarding insights when we open ourselves up to the variety of experiences and perspectives that come from such diverse positionalities. I acknowledge that a small number of conference organisers are beginning to open up their programmes to diversity and I congratulate them on that. I just urge us all to step outside of our comfort zone and talk to those who are not like us, listen to the voices of the impacted by tourism and the less privileged and seek ways we can build foundations of solidarity across the divides that we now confront. (female Senior Lecturer, March 2017)

Intersectional lenses were suggested to tackle inequality not only towards gender, but also ethnicity, geographical background, class, disability, age and more. Intersectionality has a potential to unveil even further oppressions and other types of women's exclusions, faced by, for example, women of colour, LGBTQI or disabled people. Hence, intersectional theorising offers an understanding and transformation of exclusions (Cho et al., 2013). Interestingly, the above rich comment identifying a 'diversity of diversities' also broadens the debate from the focus on tourism academics to the world of tourism generally. It pays attention to its human resources in which women rarely occupy managerial positions, their precarious situation in many service jobs as well as cases of women enslaved in tourism (i.e. Knox, 2008; Baum, 2013).

Despite the on-going rich, well-informed TOURLIST gender debate, supported by numerous initiatives from both male and female supporters, unfortunately, a group of the 'gender-sceptics' still exists that makes this debate imperative to continue. This paper uses the context of tourism academia to understand the barriers that women academics face in their career progression and development. Yet, it is clear that such analysis can be extended to other fields of studies, in more traditional disciplines. For example, a number of studies point to similar prejudice in gender balance in grant awards in STEM disciplines (i.e. Watson & Hjorth, 2015; Bornmann et al., 2007). Our research shows that tourism academia mirrors the structures and oppressions that characterise the academy more generally. At the same time, this debate extends existing feminist contributions that have highlighted the role of digital technologies in shaping as well as reflecting power relations (cf. Spencer, 2017; Wacjman, 2006). Here we can see such digital technologies as vehicles of inequalities in the form of TOURLIST in their utility to express such inequalities and the bias that accompanies such expressions. Digital technologies can become such vehicles in the sense of what Hatton (2015) terms 'social boundaries' and which are conceptualised as 'patterns of exclusion based on social inequalities, which – depending on the cultural context – may include inequalities of race, ethnicity, gender, class and citizenship....age, sexuality, ability and more. These boundaries are social constructions that vary over time and across space; and the particular cultural configurations of social privilege and marginalization vary accordingly' (1009). This underscores the need to introduce unbounded feminisms of solidarity and compassion to dismantle the bounded constructions of intersectional inequalities as described above.

We use the term 'unbounded' as the implementation of good practice to denote the erasure of limits and limitations to solidarity that can combat exclusion, inequality and the toxicity of the neoliberal university. We also employ plurality in identifying 'feminisms' to acknowledge more inclusivity in approaches, schools of thought, methodologies and epistemologies to feminist activism and solidarity. But, above all, when we make a call for 'unbounded feminisms of

solidarity and compassion' we underscore the urgency for all academics to take responsibility in offering support/solidarity; in expressing and practising care/caring; in using their voice to create a platform for others to be heard; in giving time and attention to mentor and guide colleagues; in using whatever privilege as academics we might have to challenge marginalisation of other academics. When we use 'privilege' here we include things that might appear mundane, for instance, in the context of Brexit for those who have the privilege of 'citizenship' to acknowledge and support those who don't; those who have permanent posts to acknowledge and support those suffering from precarity; those who are healthy to support those who are struggling with (mental and other kinds of) illness; those who have stable housing to acknowledge that there are indeed academics who might be on the verge of homelessness, and so on and so forth.

Tourism academia remains an insulated workplace context rigidly resisting or at least slowly responding (i.e. Khoo-Lattimore, 2018) to efforts responsive to a politics of care, diversity and inclusivity. In writing this piece we wish to draw focus to this urgency of bringing attention to the case of tourism academia but also wider academic communities that require enactments that nurture caring, compassion and feeling fuelled working lives.

## Conclusion

Using the data collected through a popular electronic mailing list (pseudonym TOURLIST), this paper provides insights on feminist activism in the tourism academy. It aims to contribute to the tourism scholarship and gender, to the on-going debates postulating to increase gender diversity in the tourism academic landscape (i.e. Chambers et al., 2017; Munar et al., 2017; Pritchard & Morgan, 2017). It further employs the notion of *intersectionalities*, rarely used in tourism studies (i.e. Pritchard, 2018), to incorporate a multitude of diversities, including gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexuality and disability. Pointing to the role of informal solidarity (Kapeller & Wolkenstein, 2013; Wilde, 2007) in championing women in the academy, the paper also underscores the necessity for more men to embrace actions of solidarity, to support and combat the lack of recognition, promotion and advancement of women in tourism academia. Collective and unified support from both men and women - an inclusive and collaborative project - is needed to create academic spaces of learning and cultures of sensitivity and which will subsequently improve the academic landscape.

This paper aims to first frame the discussion on some of the more nuanced 'hidden injuries' of the academy in how women in tourism academia are still excluded from the mainstream centres of such knowledge economies and then to hopefully stimulate more debate by suggesting collective praxis to rectify this imbalance of inequality. We need to further unpack and make sense of such experiences that shape a profoundly gendered academia as a workplace lacking equity and diverse representation. Such an unequal position of women academics is inherently unethical in it exacerbates inequity through a 'cult of individual responsibility' that positions women academics in an 'othering' process (Aiston, 2011) that can have deeply traumatic and damaging consequences for women professionally and emotionally. This kind of workplace is a 'psychotic University' (Sievers, 2008), 'unethical' (Aiston, 2011) and inherently 'dehumanising' (Christou, 2016) in viewing 'the Academy as an object of subjugation in the multipolarity of an oppressive logic of neoliberal governance...and liminality of learning' (ibid, 36) when it does not

practice the principles of ethics that it purports to advance. Bringing back empathy, compassion and solidarity in academia is a step toward ethical advancement of a workplace that can finally practice what it preaches. Finally, this intervention wishes to stimulate further debate in underscoring the need to introduce ‘unbounded feminisms of solidarity and compassion’ to dismantle the bounded constructions of intersectional inequalities. Such an approach also requires a step toward materialising a ‘diversity of diversities’ to denote intersectionalities that incorporate decolonising and inclusive approaches for the incorporation of a multitude of diversities in the workplace and the curriculum.

All these issues are interrelated since the question of decolonising the university refers to debates on the politics and power in the production of knowledge and the analysis of such power relations which are profoundly shaped by critical feminist agendas. This also means that knowledge structures remain complicit with other intersectional forms of domination and hence both academia as a workplace and the university (since it is a modern/colonial institution) as a learning space requires coalition building politics that incorporate intersectional praxis (cf. Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016). Such an approach embraces gender beyond its analytical theorising because it directly engages with its coloniality to develop new embodied ways of practices in the university as an entity of invisible norms shaping exclusions. By extension, we see a direct correlation between such a decolonial approach and the transformation of academia as an ethically grounded, interculturally open and fundamentally pluriversal institution (cf. Dunford, 2017).

A number of other themes could be explored in future empirical research. Firstly, multi methods and multi-sited ethnography that study a fuller setting, including not only academics, administrators but also students could be employed in future research examining issues of gender in academia. Secondly, applying a decolonising approach to tourism studies could be a fruitful avenue. A number of questions could be tackled related to the inclusivity of outputs. The inclusivity of what counts as value outputs in terms of promotions and metric driven assessment exercises such as the REF (Research Excellence Framework which is the national official system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions: <http://www.ref.ac.uk/>) in the UK context. And thirdly, there remains a deficit in research studying the contexts beyond Western countries. Research focusing on non-Western cases is needed to broaden our understanding of gender diversity and inclusion in tourism academia.



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